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SOMALIA  
ETHIOPIA  
KENYA

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2022 —

**WATCHLIST/  
CRISIS ALERT**

UNNATURAL DISASTER IN EAST AFRICA —

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SOMALIA  
ETHIOPIA  
KENYA



# Introduction

**For the first time ever, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) is putting out a crisis alert to its annual Emergency Watchlist report. The IRC is calling for urgent action in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya, with specific concern for impending famine in Somalia that has been dangerously neglected by the international community. By the time a famine is officially declared later this year, it will be too late to save hundreds of thousands of lives.**

The IRC's recognition of the growing risks facing East Africa led us to put Ethiopia and Somalia in the top 10 countries of concern in our [Emergency Watchlist 2022](#), which identifies the countries most at risk of a new emergency or worsening humanitarian crisis. This assessment was based both on the IRC's decades of experience working in the region and our unique Watchlist methodology. The IRC draws on dozens of quantitative and qualitative indicators such as state fragility, civil conflict, state capacity, and climate vulnerability.

The IRC's assessment was driven by the region's unique vulnerability. It is highly exposed to a host of unprecedented challenges - from an unparalleled pandemic, to escalating conflict, to the fallout from war in Ukraine - and drastically unprepared for new crises due to the compound impact of three major droughts in the past ten years. This year, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya are in the middle of their longest, most severe drought in decades and have been disproportionately affected by the Ukraine conflict, given they were reliant on Russia and Ukraine for 90% of their wheat imports.

The number of people going hungry in the region is set to surpass 20 million by September - nearly a doubling compared to late 2021. Over three million of these people are already experiencing the most extreme levels of hunger, increasing their risk of death. The worst affected is Somalia, which is entering a famine that the IRC expects to be even more severe than the 2011 famine that killed 260,000 people. Today, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia make up 2% of the world's population, but are home to 70% of the world's most extremely food insecure.<sup>1</sup> IRC teams on the ground report that people are dying already from starvation. Yet the crisis has struggled to attract the attention and funding it desperately requires.

There is nothing natural about famines in the twenty-first century. While a complex set of factors drove food insecurity, the slide into mass death is man-made, driven by international inaction. This crisis was predictable and preventable. It has been unfolding despite two years of repeated warnings. The lack of action reflects a wider failure of the international system.

It is already too late to stop people from dying, but there is still a window of opportunity to scale aid efforts to reduce the levels of death and suffering. Yet the international system is sitting in neutral at precisely the moment it needs to be accelerating. There is no time to wait for data collection to confirm what the IRC is already seeing on the ground: a country hurtling towards a catastrophic famine. A famine declaration will tell us when it is too late - that people are already dying en masse, not how many lives we can still save. Waiting to respond based on retrospective data will condemn hundreds of thousands to an unnecessary death. Instead the international community needs to look forward, applying a no-regrets approach.

Every day of inaction is a matter of life or death.

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<sup>1</sup> WFP [reported](#) that there were 882,000 people facing IPC Phase 5 levels of food insecurity, including 401,000 in Ethiopia and 213,000 in Somalia, as of June 2022.

# Human Cost of Inaction

18.6 million across Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya are already going hungry due to this drought. As the crisis nears a tipping point, food insecurity and malnutrition are rising exponentially, not steadily. Since the start of the year, the number of people going hungry in Somalia has doubled<sup>2</sup> and has risen by almost 75% in Kenya.<sup>3</sup> This means 7.1 million people are now food insecure in Somalia, which represents half of the population and double the scale of the food insecurity crisis compared to when the UN declared famine in 2011.

It is not just the spread of food insecurity that is alarming, but how quickly it is deepening. Since the start of the year, the number of people in Kenya on the brink of famine conditions has tripled.<sup>4</sup> Since April, the population already facing famine conditions - and risk of death - in Somalia has risen by 160%.<sup>5</sup> Seven million livestock have already died across the region, including 1 in 3 livestock in Somalia since mid 2021 – an alarming precursor to human life loss on a mass scale and a crippling blow to long-term community recovery.

## A CHILD STARVATION CRISIS

Famine is a children's crisis. The majority of those at risk of death are young children. During the 2011 famine in Somalia, half of the deaths were children under five years old. It was infants and toddlers who bore the brunt of global inaction.

The horrors of 2011 are set to repeat this year. Across the region, 7.1 million children are acutely malnourished. 2 million of these children are experiencing the most extreme form of malnutrition, which increases their risk of death tenfold. In Somalia, nearly half of all children under the age of five are malnourished. 380,000 of them are at risk of death. In one IRC clinic in Somalia we have seen a staggering 265% increase in severely malnourished children under the age of 5 over the course of one month.



An IRC health manager checks a child for malnutrition at a nutrition center run by the IRC at Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. The child's mother, Judith, has lived in the camp for over twenty years as a refugee after fleeing conflict in present-day South Sudan. All her children have been born in the camp. She told IRC staff, "We have many challenges here, including food security. The drought is affecting us but we are not receiving enough food. Sometimes we go to bed without eating." Credit: Patrick Meinhardt/IRC.

<sup>2</sup> Acute food insecurity rose from 3.5 million in December 2021 to 7.1 million in June-September 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Acute food insecurity rose from 2.37 million in January 2022 to 4.1 million by June 2022.

<sup>4</sup> The number of people in IPC Phase 4 rose from 368,000 in January 2022 to 1.1 million in June 2022.

<sup>5</sup> The number of people in IPC Phase 5 rose from 81,000 to 213,000.

At this stage, an immediate scale up in the humanitarian response is the only option left to prevent a catastrophic death toll. Many people have now exhausted all measures that helped them survive the first, second, third, and now fourth failed rains in a row. Water sources are drying up. Crops are failing. Cattle are dying. IRC teams report that markets that could function in 2011 are now failing. Rising prices are making food unaffordable for many families; the cost of a food basket has risen by 66% in Ethiopia and 36% in Somalia. According to IRC's clients, prices for staples like cooking oil and grains have tripled.

As people are unable to survive where they are, they are leaving their homes and moving in search of food, water and aid - even if that means walking for days, crossing into neighboring countries, and taking dangerous routes. 1.1 million people in the region are already displaced due to drought. Some people have died while traveling in search of help due to the lack of water. As people move towards city centers and overcrowded IDP camps, they are straining limited resources and risk creating localized conflict over limited resources.

Unaddressed, food crises this severe have generational impacts. In IDP camps in Somalia, IRC teams are supporting Somalis who were displaced during the 2011 and 2017 famines who still remain in camps and have no way to support their families without aid. Many of the people on the move are women with children, for whom these risks are increased. Food insecurity exacerbates existing risks of gender-based violence, such as intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and early and forced marriage. In Somalia, more young girls are facing violence compared to previous periods, according to data from several IRC's project sites.

There is no time to wait. During the peak of the 2011 famine, 30,000 people were dying each month and a total of 260,000 people died. Adjusting for total population, that would be on par with 6.5 million deaths in the United States, including more than 3 million children under 5 years old - the equivalent of more than six COVID-19 pandemics.

## “System Failure” in East Africa

The impending famine in East Africa is a devastating example of the “System Failure” that the IRC warned about in the IRC's Emergency Watchlist 2022: the system for preventing and addressing humanitarian crises is failing.

There are three types of system failure tipping the scale towards catastrophe. First, structural failures from conflict, climate change and COVID-19 have played out over years, even decades, and explain why the region is so vulnerable to new shocks. Second, the immediate-term shock of the war in Ukraine, coinciding with the severe 2021-2022 drought in East Africa, explains why people are starving now. Either one of these failures on their own would have caused a disaster, but combined with the third - failure to adequately activate the humanitarian system - means that we are facing a terminal system failure in East Africa, most immediately in Somalia.

### **A. STRUCTURAL FAILURE: COMPOUNDING IMPACTS OF CONFLICT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND - MOST RECENTLY - COVID-19 HAVE MADE THE REGION UNIQUELY VULNERABLE.**

Famine is not a constant, inescapable risk in East Africa. Rather, the threat of famine has grown as the region and international community have failed to take action to address key drivers of hunger:

- + **Conflict** is the main driver of food insecurity globally. Over time it destroys communities' resilience to shocks by blocking economic development, destroying infrastructure such as irrigation and healthcare, decimating livelihoods, undermining food production and driving displacements. Somalia has seen three decades of conflict and parts of Ethiopia have seen conflict in recent years, destabilizing communities. Indeed, Somalia currently produces less than half the amount of food it did before its civil war began in the early 1990s, forcing the country to become increasingly dependent on food imports and highly vulnerable to supply chain disruptions and fluctuations in global food prices, such as the kind from the war in Ukraine.



Active conflict and contested areas of control also make it harder to prevent famine. New conflict has emerged across Ethiopia since 2020, overlapping with some areas hit by drought and stretching the entire humanitarian response. In Somalia, conflict remains active and, as the drought deepened, nearly 900,000 people were living in areas under al-Shabaab control. Many people have already tried to leave these areas, but those who remain are largely inaccessible to humanitarian organizations.

- + **Climate change** is a crisis that the countries in East Africa did not create, but they are highly vulnerable to its effects. Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia have faced three droughts in the past decade (2010-2011, 2016-2016, and 2021-2022), wreaking havoc on crops and livestock and making it harder for people to recover each time. Today, the region is in the midst of its longest-running drought in 40 years. There have been a record four consecutive failed rainy seasons. The current drought has now surpassed the three failed rains that contributed to the devastating 2011 famine, making this drought the longest and most severe. The next rainy season, in October-December, is also predicted to fail, which would be an unprecedented fifth failed season and could result in near-total collapse in domestic food production in drought-affected areas.
- + **COVID-19** Global food prices have been rising since 2019, and the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have made it harder for people to afford enough food for their families - even before the shocks described below. However, rather than responding where needs are greatest, many donor countries have turned inward, reducing the funds they make available.



80-year-old Hawo has lived through multiple droughts in Somalia. The current drought has already cost her many of her livestock. She said, "If this severe drought persists, none of us will survive. The drought will sweep both the animals and the people. Droughts are not new to me but to my experience, this is the worst I have ever seen." Credit: Horn Connect for the IRC.

## **B. THE DEVASTATING DOUBLE THREAT OF WAR IN UKRAINE, COMING ON TOP OF THE 2021-2022 DROUGHT IN EAST AFRICA, HAS ACTED AS AN ACCELERATOR.**

The war in Ukraine has pushed global food prices to record levels. Ukraine and Russia produce a quarter of the world's wheat and grain. They have historically provided 90% of the wheat imported to the East Africa region - 92% in Somalia. The conduct of that war, including the blockages of Black Sea ports, is driving up the global prices of food, fertilizer, and fuel. Fertilizer prices have risen 30% globally. East Africa has been hit particularly hard, with a larger rise in food insecurity attributed to the Ukraine crisis than any other region.<sup>6</sup>

Increased global food and fertilizer prices would not have had such a significant impact if drought had not already devastated agriculture. And the worst is yet to come. Reduced access to fertilizers coincided with the region's main planting season, so the effects will not be fully seen until future harvests later this year and next year.

## **C. FAILURE TO ACTIVATE THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEMS ESTABLISHED TO AVERT FAMINE.**

The international community knows how to respond effectively to the risk of famine, having done so before in the region in 2017, but this time it has failed to launch pre-emptive, early action. The first warning that the region could be facing a multi-year drought came in 2020. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) warned in October 2020 that La Niña effect had developed and would result in low rainfall in the region over the coming year. Throughout 2021, the risk grew - leading the IRC to put both Ethiopia and Somalia in the top ten of our Emergency Watchlist for 2022. Inadequate funding means that the humanitarian response in the region is failing to scale up sufficiently as the crisis worsens.

## **HOW THE SYSTEM SHOULD WORK TO PREVENT FAMINE**

**Promotion of peace, stability and economic development** should enable communities to build their resilience to shocks.

**Early-warning systems** should pick up the growing likelihood of a shock and enable the humanitarian response to start scaling up long before famine is declared.

**Anticipatory funding** should be arranged, with pre-agreed triggers by donors to initiate the release of funding.

**Support to national governments** to establish and expand inclusive social safety nets.

**Donors should then step up their funds** for: humanitarian cash transfers, support for people to earn an income and maintain livelihoods, malnutrition treatment for children, putting in place clean water supplies and sanitation, ensuring healthcare, provision of protection assistance for women and children, and expansion of social safety nets programs.

<sup>6</sup>WFP reports that 10.5 million people in East Africa are acutely food insecure due to the ripple effects from the Ukraine crisis.



# The International Response: Why “Never Again” Happens Again and Again

What we are seeing is a failure of political will to apply lessons and act before it is too late. Rhetoric in global capitals is not translating into change for people in the world's crisis zones.

The failure of the international community to avert the predictable and preventable 2011 Somalia famine informed the development of technical approaches to mitigate future disasters - including commitments to “no regrets” and cash programming, flexible funding and scalable social safety nets. But these lessons have not been applied.

In recent years, global attention to food insecurity and famine prevention has reached the highest levels, yet meaningful, resourced action remains inadequate. In 2018, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2417, which draws attention to the link between conflict and famine. Last year, the G7 adopted its Famine Compact, and this year the G7 pledged new, if insufficient, financial commitments to addressing the global food security crisis, and convened a Global Alliance for Food Security under the leadership of the German Presidency. This year, the US also convened a ministerial meeting at the UN on global food insecurity and announced the Roadmap for Global Food Security–Call to Action which calls for new humanitarian and resilience funding. The African Union has prioritized a focus on Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent in 2022.

In spite of these initiatives, the international response is failing to respond to “System Failure” in the region on three fronts:

## 1. FAILURE IN PREVENTION

Weather forecasts are becoming more accurate, yet funding decisions are not aligning. A study of natural disaster responses around the world found that only around 2.3% of the total funding analyzed was pre-arranged and deployed quickly. Yet, a USAID study on Somalia estimates that each dollar invested in early response and resilience saves nearly three dollars by preventing income and livestock losses.

In 2011, the UN declaration of the famine in Somalia came months too late. At least half of all deaths during the famine had already occurred by the time famine was declared. Yet it was not until that official declaration that donors significantly stepped up funding.

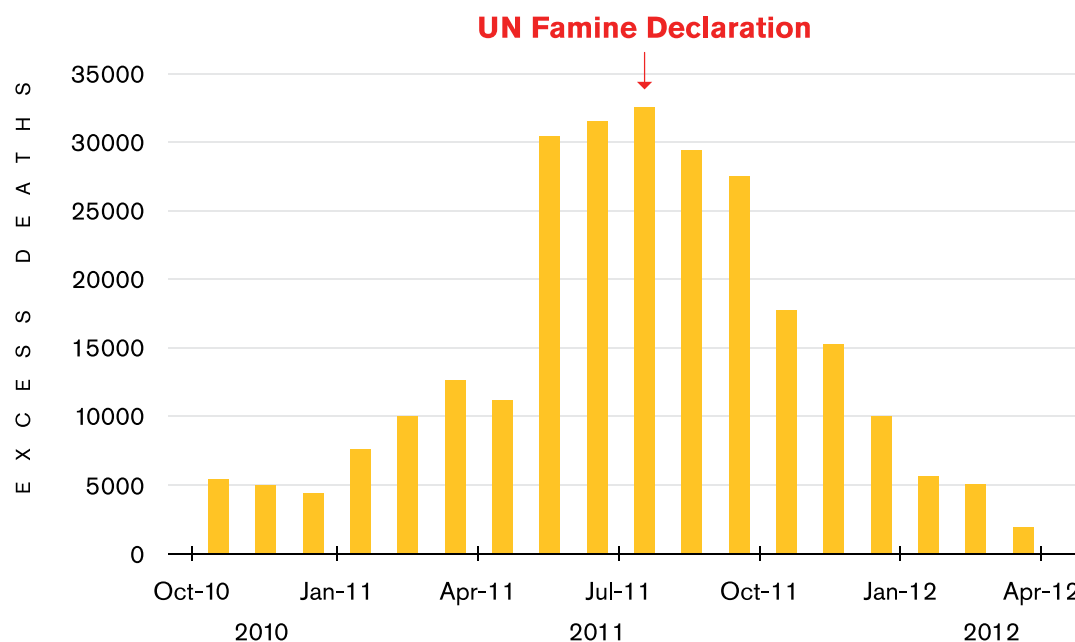


Sehiwi (middle) lives in the Somali region of Ethiopia, the area of the country hit hardest by the current drought. She says the drought has already caused 80% of her livestock (goats, cattle and camels) to die. Credit: Martha Tadesse/IRC.

History is repeating itself. The international community failed to invest in anticipatory action - the mechanisms through which to pre-position programs and prepare financing ahead of time to deliver a faster response. Early warning data since the end of 2020 has consistently raised the alarm about deteriorating conditions across the region. Yet, social safety nets were not scaled up, funding for anticipatory action was limited, and existing funding has not been released quickly enough or flexible enough to combine an emergency, life saving response with longer term support that would build economic resilience to future shocks.

### MONTHLY DEATHS IN THE 2011 SOMALIA FAMINE

Excess mortality rates per month



Source: ICR visualization of monthly excess mortality estimates from a 2013 report commissioned by FEWSNET and FSNAU on famine in Somalia.

## 2. FAILURE IN MITIGATION AND RESPONSE

The system has failed to scale up the humanitarian response even after the crisis rapidly deteriorated and deaths were reported. In Somalia, the government issued a Drought Declaration in April and the Somalia Humanitarian Fund allocated \$13.3 million to kick-start the response in March, while the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated \$27 million in April. New pledges for the region of close to \$1.4 billion made in April 2022 are vital but those pledges on paper have not translated into significant funding and a scale up of aid to date.

Funding shortfalls are explained in part by the international focus on the war in Ukraine. After just over three months, the \$1.9 billion appeal for the humanitarian response in Ukraine was 85% funded. Donors raised \$16 billion for wider efforts to support Ukraine within a month, demonstrating the capacity for resource mobilization when the political will exists. Yet the countries experiencing the ripple effects of the Ukraine war have fallen off the radar.

In East Africa, these funding shortfalls are forcing humanitarians to make impossible choices. In Somalia, WFP has suspended malnutrition prevention programs to concentrate funds on malnutrition treatment activities, which will save lives today but allow more children to become malnourished tomorrow. WFP has reduced food rations for refugees in Ethiopia and Kenya, leaving them with only 50% of the rations they need.



## FUNDING FALLS SHORT

Generous funding for Ukrainians stands in sharp contrast to severe underfunding in East Africa. While Ukraine represents 5% of the world's humanitarian needs, it has received 20% of global aid this year and more than four times as much humanitarian funding as Somalia. Donors have provided \$56 per Somali in need of aid compared to \$121 per Ukrainian in need of aid.<sup>7</sup>

Funding for East Africa is also falling far short of responses to previous famine warnings around the world. In 2017, four countries (Yemen, Somalia, northeast Nigeria, and South Sudan) faced the risk of famine. 20 million people were food insecure - the same as today in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. The humanitarian response in Yemen was 75% funded, South Sudan 71%, Nigeria 69%, and Somalia 69%.

Yet across East Africa today, an emergency appeal for the drought has received only \$685 million – 38% of the funds required for May to December 2022. The wider humanitarian responses across these three countries were only 22% funded by July.<sup>8</sup> Halfway through the year, the entire humanitarian response for Somalia has received 30% of the funding required and less than half of the amount received during the 2017 drought when a famine was averted. Critical sectors for famine prevention in Somalia are even worse off; food aid is 20% funded, nutrition 18% and health 10%. Meanwhile, Kenya's drought response is 16% funded.

Once fulfilled, new commitments from the United States in July 2022 would bring the region's overall humanitarian funding to around \$1.7 billion - around 40% funded.<sup>9</sup>

## 3. FAILURE OF POLITICAL WILL

The global response is failing and major donors waiting for others to step up will cost thousands of lives.

Claims that only Russia can end the global food crisis overlook the vital role that donors can and should play. Key donors from the 2016-2017 drought have not stepped up this year. In 2016, the UK's Department of International Development played a vital role in galvanizing action on the part of other donors and encouraging organizations to scale up their responses. It was the first donor to announce a substantial uplift in its response, approving £10 million of funding in January 2016 and providing a total of £861 million. The UK convened technical meetings in London and used high profile visits to call on other donors to avert famine.

Fast forward to 2022 and leadership is absent. The UK has made limited commitments to the region this year. While OCHA and ECHO organized two high-level roundtables to advocate for swift action, and the EU has contributed 61 million EUR in support to Somalia and logistical support to the response, these efforts have not driven coordinated donor action.

The United States has made significant funding commitments, including almost half of the G7 funding commitments announced in June and remains the largest donor to the region. This year, a US emergency aid package on Ukraine included \$5 billion for global food insecurity.

Once fulfilled, a new US pledge from July 2022 would bring funding on par with the response to the 2017 drought in East Africa. But the current crisis is not merely a repeat of that drought. Today's drought is far more severe and prolonged.

<sup>7</sup> As of July 15, 2022, UN OCHA's Financial Tracking System reports \$1.9 billion in funding for the Ukraine flash appeal and 15.7 million Ukrainians are in need of humanitarian aid, whereas \$435 million in funding had been provided for the Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan and 7.7 million people in Somalia require aid.

<sup>8</sup> According to UN OCHA, \$4.4 billion is required for the region. \$435.8 million and \$427 million has been provided to the humanitarian response in Somalia and Kenya, respectively. While official UN data is not yet available for the Ethiopia response this year, the IRC has counted \$500 million in reported US funding to the response in Ethiopia to better capture the funding for the entire region.

<sup>9</sup> IRC estimates that around \$750.8 million has already been provided by the United States to humanitarian responses in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia this year (the UN has officially recorded \$223.5 million for Somalia and \$27.3 million for Kenya in calendar year 2022 from the US, while \$500 million was reported by the US government for Ethiopia in fiscal year 2022. The US announced their pledge of \$1.2 billion brings total US contributions to \$1.6 billion, meaning, at most, \$850 million in new money this year.

The number of people going hungry in the region is twice as high today. Needs continue to outpace funding.

Across the board, funding pledges are being released to frontline humanitarian responders far too slowly. As seen in other crises, funding also tends to move via UN agencies, creating serious delays in reaching implementing NGOs on the ground.

As global food insecurity reaches record levels and the number of humanitarian crises around the world is rising, the funding crisis in East Africa should serve as a warning to all donors to assess and invest in their own capacity to ensure funding can move faster for this crisis and future ones.

## Recommendations for the international community

Conflict, abuse of power and extreme poverty are as old as humankind. The humanitarian sector has emerged to address the consequences. But the record levels of need, hunger, displacement and violence against humanitarians indicate that the system to prevent and address humanitarian need is no longer working. The countries on Watchlist 2022 provide a window into what has gone wrong. Three interlocking changes have weakened and ultimately overwhelmed the system. Since these three drivers are global, system failure will continue to mutate and spread, throwing ever more people into crisis, unless the international community takes urgent action.

### 1. ACTIVATE THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM.

- + **Declare a system-wide scale up.** A full scale up of the humanitarian response is urgently required with greater coordination among UN agencies, NGOs, donors, and Member States. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) should immediately declare a system-wide emergency response (Level 3 response) for Somalia, reflecting the alarming deterioration in the context. These activations are designed precisely for moments like this to mobilize the resources required and rapidly scale up humanitarian capacity with support to national authorities, logistical support, surge staff, rapidly expanded humanitarian programming, and empowered leadership and coordination of the humanitarian response.
- + **Establish a humanitarian contact group.** Reflecting experience from the Syria response in which a Level 3 designation alone was inadequate to drive the necessary scale up, greater coordination is required. Member States, including governments of affected countries, should partner with the humanitarian community represented by the IASC Emergency Directors group (which includes UN, international organization, and NGO consortia representatives), Regional / Humanitarian Coordinators, and local civil society leaders to establish a contact group that meets every quarter to assess progress and resources allocation in the response and collectively address challenges as they arise.
- + **Set up a donor coordination mechanism with NGOs,** given their critical role as implementers and responders on the ground. Top donors to the response should establish a coordinated mechanism to regularly convene both national and international NGOs. These meetings should focus on the measures required to rapidly scale response capacities to respond swiftly to rising mortality, suffering, and forced displacement.
- + **Adopt and scale up proven solutions.** The response should seek to apply lessons from previous efforts to avert famine with rapid investment in proven approaches including humanitarian cash assistance to meet the expanded needs of food insecure communities, malnutrition prevention and response programs, resilience efforts, and expanded support through existing social safety net mechanisms. For instance, IRC's call for a combined, simplified protocol for the treatment of acute malnutrition (or wasting) could scale up support for both moderate and severe



acute malnutrition. UNICEF, as the lead UN agency on wasting, has a vital role to play in leading these practice changes.

- + **Member States should clarify leadership and establish clear lines of accountability for response delivery**, reflecting the need for urgent political attention to address the crisis in East Africa. The food insecurity crisis should be placed at the top of the agenda of the group of Special Envoys for the Horn of Africa given the massive humanitarian, economic, and political stakes. They should meet every month in 2022 with national counterparts, including Somalia's new Special Envoy for Drought Response, with a focus on: identifying and securing commitments of new funding from non-traditional humanitarian donors, intensifying diplomacy to address conflict and negotiations between parties to conflicts, and identifying new funding streams, including climate finance.
- + **Leaders from across the UN system and donors to the humanitarian response should be visiting affected countries**, bringing global attention to these crises. The UN Secretary-General and head of UN OCHA, Martin Griffiths, have a key role to play in elevating attention and should urgently visit the region, particularly Somalia.

## 2. ADOPT A “NO REGRETS” APPROACH TO FUNDING.

- + **Fully fund the response.** Donors should fully fund the humanitarian appeal of \$4.4 billion this year.
- + **Scale up donor capacity to move funding quickly.** The rapid disbursement of existing and new funding will require donors to urgently upscale their own contract management and administrative capacity to allow funding to be deployed to national and international frontline operational responders. Major donors should invest in greater internal capacity to staff up, move funds out the door quickly, and manage more grants.
- + **Ensure funding is fast and flexible, including by providing top ups to current implementing partners.** Most immediately, donors should provide top up funding to existing partners able to bring their response activities rapidly to scale, and frontload funding through existing multi-year funding mechanisms. When funding requests are made, donors should facilitate and support rapid decision making on the re-deployment of funding from existing activities, to famine prevention activities. Across the board, donors should make existing funding more flexible to allow NGOs to pivot and redirect funding to famine activities given the delays in new funding.

All donors should also provide new funding through fast and flexible mechanisms, giving governments and response partners the ability to scale up proven interventions and surge in necessary staff. Such funds should be made available to preselected national and international NGOs as well as to UN agencies. Funding should focus on the core sectors and interventions required to avert unnecessary deaths. Food aid and cash programming are vital, but must be matched with urgent support to life saving health and water and sanitation activities to address existing and future disease outbreaks, as well as programs that address the secondary protection impacts of the food crisis and associated displacement.

## 3. MOBILIZE RESOURCES FOR HUMANITARIAN ACCESS NEGOTIATIONS.

- + **Fund humanitarian access roles globally and locally for East Africa.** Member states should provide urgent funding for the UN Special Advisor on humanitarian access - a role that the UN Secretary-General committed to more than a year ago but was blocked by Member States during the UN's Budget Committee negotiations.

The UN should immediately deploy staff to East Africa to work in partnership with regional stakeholders including the African Union and Organization of Islamic Cooperation to facilitate dialogue between humanitarians and non-state actors in the region, including al-Shabaab in Somalia given the large population at risk of death in areas under its control. Additional access negotiation capacity should also be deployed to country and regional OCHA offices to support negotiations and capacity building of national partners.

- + **Consider the humanitarian fallout of any new counterterrorism designations.** The UN Security Council and all Members States should carefully weigh the humanitarian fallout of any new counter-terror restrictions during such a precarious moment. While many factors contributed to the 2011 famine in Somalia, a US designation of al-Shabaab had a chilling effect and created serious obstacles to a timely response at scale. All counter-terrorism measures should include clear humanitarian exemptions to ensure humanitarian actors are able to scale up without fear of legal consequences, while recognizing that even with exemptions, new terrorism designations often have immediate, unintended chilling effects on humanitarian, commercial, and financial actors.

#### 4. ADDRESS GLOBAL TRADE CHALLENGES STEMMING FROM THE WAR IN UKRAINE.

- + **Pursue all avenues to restart exports from Ukraine.** Discussion in Turkey between Russian, Ukrainian and UN officials designed to increase wheat exports are vital. Ending the Russian blockade is a key step in addressing the global food crisis and the impacts in East Africa, but it is not the only solution. Efforts to facilitate exports overland via Poland, and to restore river ports on the Danube to facilitate exports should also be supported and accelerated.
- + **Ease export restrictions on food, fuel, and fertilizer around the world.** The rapid disbursement of existing and new funding will require donors to urgently upscale their own contract management and administrative capacity to allow funding to be deployed to national and international frontline operational responders. Major donors should invest in greater internal capacity to staff up, move funds out the door quickly, and manage more grants.
- + **Ensure funding is fast and flexible, including by providing top ups to current implementing partners.** Simultaneous diplomatic efforts should be focused on ensuring trade from other food, fuel and fertilizer-producing nations continues without restrictions. Since the beginning of the war, there have been 31 new export restrictions, which threaten to compound the impact of the Ukraine crisis. Wheat producing nations with export bans in place, including India, should be encouraged to expand exemptions on exports to humanitarian contexts most impacted by the ripple effects of the Ukraine war.



Lokiyoto carries water to her home in Turkana, Kenya. She and her family were displaced due to drought, which caused their livestock to die and robbed the family of their source of income. Lokiyoto must now walk five hours to get water. Two of her five children died this year due to malnutrition. Her surviving children – all under the age of five – are malnourished but are being treated at an IRC nutrition clinic and recovering. Photo Credit: Patrick Meinhardt/IRC.





## IRC Response

East Africa is home to some of the IRC's longest-running programs globally, with operations in Somalia for over 40 years, Kenya for 30 years, and Ethiopia for 20 years. Today, 2,000 IRC staff in the region are scaling up our programs to address the current drought and rising food insecurity, including expanding to new areas to meet severe needs.

### SOMALIA

The IRC provided assistance to Somalis through the 2011 famine and the 2016/17 drought, giving us clear insights into the risks communities face. Our water, health, nutrition and livelihoods programs reach 280,000 Somalis a year. In light of recent droughts and flooding, our efforts are focused in the South-West, Galmudug, Galgaduud, Banadir, and Puntland provinces, providing emergency relief, primary healthcare, and protecting vulnerable population.

### ETHIOPIA

The IRC reaches over 3.2 million clients across the country each year through programs in environmental health, child protection, economic recovery, and women's empowerment. In 2021, we further provided critical assistance to over 100,000 refugees and more than 500,000 Ethiopians affected by natural disasters.

### KENYA

IRC teams deliver lifesaving emergency aid including healthcare, women's protection, and legal rights education to refugee populations and their host communities. Our health, nutrition, and conflict resolution programs in Kenya have delivered critical care to over 300,000 people a year, including nutrition support for malnourished children and supporting refugees and vulnerable Kenyans to start businesses and rebuild their lives.



The International Rescue Committee (IRC) helps people whose lives have been shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and rebuild.

Founded in 1933 at the call of Albert Einstein, we now work in over 40 crisis-affected countries as well as communities throughout Europe and the Americas.

Ingenuity, fortitude and optimism remain at the heart of who we are. We deliver lasting impact by providing health care, helping children learn, and empowering individuals and communities to become self-reliant, always with a focus on the unique needs of women and girls.